MUTINY

A PAPER OF
ANARCHISTIC IDEAS
& ACTIONS

#39 JUNE 2009

Stop Wasting My Time
The Labour of Care Needs to be Shared

The Importance of Political Solidarity

Reflections on the End of Union Solidarity and the Community Union Weekends

Protest in Villawood Detention Centre

FREE ZINE

Mutiny is an anarchist collective based in Sydney. We started this zine to explore different avenues of disobedience & resistance, & to encourage people to write about their ideas, actions & experiences.

This month the Mutiny Collective and the Mutiny Zine Collective had a meeting to begin discussing how the two collectives have engaged with each other and to reassess our politcal relevance to the current social climate. We also thought we should make our aims concious and explicit. (We also ate loads of great food.) We meet regularly, please contact us on the address below:

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Thanks as always to Jura Boy & Comrade Secretary, & to distributors & subscribers

(The mutiny zine collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)

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Australia

Follow up on the death in custody of Aboriginal Elder Mr Ward, ambassador for the Ngaanyatjarra people.

The coronial inquest finished on May 1, findings are due to be presented on June 12. Corrective Services Commissioner Ian Johnson travelled to Kalgoorlie to publicly apologise to Mr Ward's family, accepting responsibility for the 46-year-old's death in January last year who was trapped in a prison van for four hours, in temperatures over 50°C after being arrested on Invasion Day for drink driving. He had third-degree burns to his stomach and died after being taken to Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. His family say he was treated like an animal. Twenty people protested outside the offices of private prison operator GSL in Perth on May 14 to demand an end to deaths in custody.

Thousands rally against racism in Melbourne

Over 5,000 Indian students and supporters marched on Sunday May 31, prompted by a wave of racial assaults. They marched from Royal Melbourne Hospital, where 25-year-old Shravan Kumar has been since May 9 when he was stabbed by a group of teens.

There have been 70 assaults on Indians in a year in Melbourne, four in the past fortnight. Thirty percent of assaults in Melbourne's western suburbs are against Indians, a grossly disproportionate figure. The latest assault happened that Sunday- a 35 year old taxi driver was bashed by a drunk passenger.

Several hundred students protested overnight into Monday morning when 200 police broke up a sit-in protest in the city centre, detaining 18 and using excessive force.

New Zealand

Urewera 18

All 18 defendants in the "state terror case" plead NOT GUILTY at the High Court in Auckland, NZ this month. Their non-association orders have now been dropped totally and the frequency of their reporting to police changed from bi-weekly to just once in the months of August, December 09 and April next year. This is a major victory for the defendants and their families. The trial is scheduled for December 18 2009.
www.october15thsolidarity.info/

Copenhagen

Ungdomshuset (the Youth House)

The city council of Copenhagen has agreed to give two buildings to a newly formed group named Jagtvej 69 which was the address of the previous squat Ungdomshuset.The council will subsidise the rent to the same amount that they are asking for the 2 buildings in northwest area of the city. They began to move in July of last year. The houses will have space for a library/café, which will also be used for film screenings and debates, a dedicated training and other activities area which will also be used for bigger meetings and on another floor band rehearsal space, workshop space and a party room.
http://www.dortheavej-61.dk/english-info/how-does-it-work.aspx

France

Tarmac 9 update

French authorities onThursday authorised the release of Julien Coupat, who has been detained for more than six months on suspicion of sabotaging high-speed train lines. Coupat, 34, was arrested by anti-terrorist police in November 2008 and his lengthy detention without

charges being filed had become highly controversial.

Coupat, the last of the 10 suspects arrested to remain in custody, has always said he was innocent but he is still under investigation for organised, terrorism-related destruction of property. The failure to secure any convictions after a highly publicised raid by hundreds of police has proved embarrassing to the government, which has been accused of whipping up terrorism fears to justify tough new security measures.

Economics sucks and workers are pissed!

In Bulgaria,

The Bulgarian steel giant Kremikovtzi, now over a billion dollars in debt due to the economic crisis, has shut down operations this month. More than 1,000 plant workers have marched on the Ministry of Economy and Energy in Sofia, after threatening earlier to boycott shutdown preparations by walking out on the job. Two workers were arrested during brief clashes with police as the angry crowd tried to storm the ministry. After weeks of protest the workers have threatened hunger strikes and announced plans for more aggressive actions and a nationwide rally of people working in and out of the manufacturing sector in a bid to protect the mill.

South Korea

May 21 in South Korea, Ssangyong announced plans to sack 2,646 employees (36 percent of its workforce) in what would be the country's first mass layoffs since the global economic crisis. Workers immediately stopped work and occupied the factory demanding that the company minimise job losses through work-sharing. Trade unions have set up tents outside the now closed factory to support the workers and gain the support of the public.

and Bangladesh.

A wildcat strike of garment workers demanding unpaid wages saw bosses of the Rupashi Sweater Factory attacked in central Bangladesh. The workers marched from factory to factory with 15,000 ending up on the street and 14 factories being vandalised as the roads became a battleground between those on strike and the police.

Animal Liberation

After years of work on the commercial kangaroo industry, Animal Liberation has recently put together a very damning expose which highlights some of the problems of the industry, including animal welfare, sustainability, environmental degradation, and hygiene and food safety concerns. The report, entitled 'A Shot In The Dark', is available at http://www.animal-lib.org.au.

On April 29, the day this report went into publishing, 9 police investigators came unannounced to the Animal Liberation HQ with a search warrant, stating that if the organisation were to contest the warrant the consequences included 2yrs imprisonment and a $30,000 fine. The entire office was raided for over 6 hrs, and the police left with 4 computers, 1 laptop, one employee's mobile phone, and folders of documentation about the kangaroo campaign. There was no indication as to why the computers were taken (instead of copying the hard drives) and when they could be expected back. The police are now claiming that it may be 6-9 months before the computers and phone are returned.

Prior to raiding the ALHQ, the police team also conducted a search at Silliker, the pathology testing laboratory where Animal Liberation had kangaroo carcasses analysed, found to have 'alert' levels of bacteria and disease, rendering them unfit for human consumption.

The search warrant was granted as two Animal Liberation employees are currently under investigation by the Queensland police over allegations of break and enter (into kangaroo chillers) and food contamination (contamination of kangaroo carcasses). Charges have not yet been laid.

Stop Wasting My Time

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We need to decide to be effective, to start taking power and our struggles seriously. The Left - and by that I mean counter-hegemonic movements that wants to organise power, and therefore wealth, equitably; or, in simpler speak, social justice movements - is weak. We need to build movement. This means committing ourselves to grounded and long-term organising.

We know largely where we are at. We have histories to guide us. We know the state and capitalism - institutionalised in corporations - are amongst our main enemies. Despite debates about just what the state is, we know when we encounter it. We know it in the courtrooms, and when confronted by police. We know it in the army tanks that drive into indigenous communities and when we cross borders. We confront corporations whenever we confront the state, the state whenever we confront capitalism. More often than not, it is hard to tell them apart. Working as one, the state and corporations inflict immense violence on people and the earth. We know we must stop their work.

Despite this knowledge, our dependence on the state and corporations is immense. We cannot feed, house, transport, educate, or heal ourselves without them. We are asking people to join us in a movement to end the work of the state and capitalism, but we depend on them to meet our most basic needs. The paradox in this is so stark as to outline a fundamental requirement of the Left: we must learn and organise to depend on ourselves, to create our own power, a counter-power. This is not a new idea. People on the Left have long been theorising the process by which, instead of taking state power, we build our own power base, thereby rendering state and corporate power redundant and giving us the autonomy we need to struggle against them. We have only to look at the Zapatistas to see counter-power in action. These indigenous communities are meeting their basic needs autonomously. Of course, projects focused on meeting our basic needs risk marginalising the need for structural change, but projects that do nothing to meet these needs risk becoming purely symbolic.

From a feminist perspective, building a counter-power must include localising caretaking work. We share as a community the tasks of caring for one another, for children, our elders, the sick, and the spaces we learn, work and live in. When this caretaking work is shared, it enables women - on whom most caretaking work usually falls - the time and energy to develop themselves in other ways than caretakers. Only by sharing this work can we remove ourselves from capitalism's sphere, from a dependency on paying people - usually poor non-white women - to act as caretakers.

I am not interested in building counter-power that is not consciously feminist. It is easy to imagine communities building counter-power in which violence against women is a daily, naturalised phenomenon, in which women are objectified, and in which gendered divisions of labour continue to disproportionately undervalue the work of women. It is easy because in so much leftist movement this happens. This

writing addresses the latter issue: it is a vocalisation of my frustration at the unwillingness of men to acknowledge that women do a disproportionate amount of undervalued invisible caretaking work in the world and the Left. Caretaking includes childcare, cleaning, cooking, and emotional work. This work should be visible, valued and shared. This is not to say that no men do any of these things, simply that women do most of it.

In my late teens, I realized that women were often more active and sensitive listeners and more supportive than men. Later, when I "became political", I found that, whereas men and women were both present around activism, women did most of the organising. I found also that men in the Left talked too much. This, combined with experiencing everything from sleaziness to sexual assault from leftist men, led me to organise almost entirely with women. I am suddenly doing political work with more men than I ever have before. As a group, these men are not doing their share of caretaking work. This, coupled with the fact that men outside of the Left also do not do a fair share of caretaking work, means that I feel surrounded by men who - like boys - demand caretaking but do not give in return.

When I point out this inequity to men, they respond in different ways. Some say when you clean in front of them they feel "guilty", but they nevertheless do not help. Others say they don't have to clean up after themselves because they "do other stuff", are "good activists" or "do favours" for you. Others say cleanliness is relative; if you are bothered by their mess, that is your problem. Others point to the cleaning they do. This behaviour is testament to the ongoing conviction amongst men that doing some cleaning is exceptional, whereas women think doing some cleaning is an obvious part of life. Men who make women ask them to do obvious caretaking work don't respect the energy required to do this asking. Nor do they respect that they are forcing us into a problematic gender role whereby women become nags, mothers, or angry bitches.

Men tell me they have few male friends with whom they talk about how they are feeling. Women tell me they usually rely on female friends for their emotional needs. I take from this and my personal experience that fewer men than women are doing the day-to-day emotional work necessary to get us through life's ups and downs. Often, men not practised in giving emotional support nonetheless demand it from women, so women are asked to give but can expect little in return. I seldom hear men on the Left express gratitude for the emotional work women do. It is as if this work is invisible. This has contributed to my frustration when men ask formally at collective meetings how they might support a woman in a trying situation. I have wanted to say that, because women are practiced caretakers, we know how to support without always asking or waiting to be told and so support first and support well. By the time men ask formally how they can help, women already have the bases covered.

While some men have made conscious efforts to unlearn sexist behaviour - including how to do and proactively doing caretaking work - these men are few. For many others, women's caretaking work remains invisible. To these men, I think it worth considering the idea of a privileged standpoint. People experience the world differently and thus have different knowledge of the world, but this knowledge is not

all equal. Rather, those groups disadvantaged by power have a privileged perspective of the world. A person who grows up in a working class household, without inherited wealth, income security, a university fund, and "connections" that come from inherited social capital, has experiences that lend themselves to a critique of class privilege. Affluent people, less aware of the differences between their opportunities and those of less affluent people, will believe they have "earned" their class positionality. Likewise, people of colour who suffer racial profiling, discrimination in the housing and job market, differential treatment from educators and healthcare workers, have experiences that lend themselves to a critique of race privilege. White people, on the other hand, will often not see their own privilege. This does not mean all knowledge is relative, because we read power into these differences.

The same extends to men's and women's respective knowledge of the world. If men do not see the caretaking work women do, that does not mean women don't do it or that women's complaints can be ignored. It means men must look harder. If men don't see women's work, it is because this labour inequity is so normal as to not merit thought. This normalcy conveniences men. It is inconvenient to women and thus we question it more.

Unless you are one of a small number of men who gets it, you should take personal responsibility for the collective short falling of men as a gender. This is not to say that by doing more caretaking work you will single-handedly dismantle patriarchy. This is rather to say that the politics of patriarchy manifest in individual behaviour. The personal is political. When men refuse to equitably share care-taking work with women, they are flexing their privilege and they are wasting women's time.

Women carry fatigue and frustration at the invisibility of their work around with them for a long time before finally overflowing with anger. When we do overflow, often we do so at one or two men who happen to not be doing their share at that particular moment at which we can take no more. Our anger, though directed at those one or two men, is also directed at a plethora of other men. Our anger is collective, but we can rarely gather together all the men who have pissed us off and speak to them collectively. The male behaviours that upset us happen in small and big ways every day but in such a dispersed way that we have no looming symbols or institutional centers, no corporate offices or parliamentary buildings, at which we can concentrate feminist protest. Rather, we politicise behavioral patterns.

This is important to remember when women loose it at men for something that, to those men, might seem small. A small failure to do obvious caretaking work is part of a larger collective failure. This larger failure is the cause of our anger, and this anger is justified. When I am angry with men who behave like boys, it is not because I am a bitch or a nag, but because these men are wasting my time, and I do not have much to spare. What will burn me out more quickly than the state and capitalism is the unwillingness of men in the Left to see, value and share the caretaking work women do. To men as a collective: please, open your eyes, take some personal responsibility, and stop wasting my time.

Images from RiniArt.org

the importance of POLITICAL SOLIDARITY

Before we talk about the G20 case, I want to acknowledge that we're standing on Aboriginal land: on the land of the Eora people of the Gadigal nation. And I want to say that not just because it's true, but also because when we're talking about state violence and resistance to state violence it's important to remember that it began here in 1788 and has continued ever since.

In November 2006 the G20 (the finance ministers from the 20 richest countries) met in Melbourne and protests began on Friday with 'corporate engagement day'. As part of that the offices of defence force recruiting, of a company called Tenix, which is a military contractor, and branches of ANZ bank, which is profiteering from the occupation of Iraq, were targeted. These visits did manage to shut down every branch of the bank in the CBD.

The next day, as is standard for any meeting of the powerful, the city was blocked off with cops and barricades. Thousands of people defied this intimidation to protest in the streets of central Melbourne and a few hundred people – some of them disguised – diverged from the rally, ran around a bit, dismantled some barricades and smashed the windows of a police van. Now, according to the state, the corporate media and some sections of the left, these actions were pretty much The Worst Thing Ever. We think there are plenty of good reasons for people to be angry under capitalism and about not having much say in how things work.

Arrests began the next day. The newspapers published 'dob in a thug' photo sheets. The police formed a taskforce that raided houses and hung around pubs trying to get information. They carried out dawn raids in Sydney in cooperation with the APEC taskforce and the counter-terrorism squad. Part of the campaign of fear was that people were given unusually serious charges and lots of them. Things like riot, conduct endangering life, aggravated burglary. This was all part of trying to intimidate and isolate people.

All up 28 people were charged. One person, Akin Sari, is currently in jail serving a 28-month sentence. Most of the other arrestees pleaded guilty to reduced charges and got fines, suspended sentences and/or community based orders. However, three people are to go to trial in Melbourne County Court starting June 30.

There's one woman from Melbourne – all they're saying she did was wave a flag and yell, and she's fighting riot charges. There are also two people from Sydney facing charges of aggravated burglary, which can carry a 25 year jail term, for allegedly walking into those offices on 'Corporate Engagement Day' with nothing more than glitter and water pistols.

These people have been through three years of worry, of travelling to court, of reporting to the police station on bail. They need our support so that individuals under attack aren't left isolated. Clearly these cases are about far more than the fate of the individuals caught up in them. As political prosecutions they're part of a much broader attack – and their outcomes, and how we deal with them, will affect all of our abilities to act on our opposition, whatever tactics we use.

In many ways police attacks and the criminalisation of dissent aren't new. There's a man in jail in Queensland right now called Lex Wotton: his crime was taking part in protests against the police after a cop beat Mulringi Domadgee to death in a cell on Palm Island. The only reason this particular Aboriginal death in custody really made the news was because the community responded by burning the police station down. The cop was still found not guilty, got a promotion and compensation.

NSW police have new secret search powers and the new bikie laws can send people to jail solely because of who they hang out with. We had APEC with its secret blacklist and the thousands of cops on the streets. A bunch of Muslim men are in maximum security jail for the most bullshit excuse for

a ‘terror plot’ ever.

This is how it works for a whole lot of people and those of us here who haven’t yet been personally hit with it need to understand that this affects us too. This is why solidarity is crucial.

The trial of the remaining G20 arrestees is potentially a key moment in developing a culture of political solidarity in Australia. Being involved in solidarity may not always be the most exciting thing to be doing, but as revolutionaries who will continue to face state repression, it is crucial to support and sustain people who are struggling to deal with the practical and mental difficulties of going through a long legal process, so that we all feel we are able to continue to participate in longer-term struggles and projects.

Also, apart from donating money to help with legal and other costs, consider coming to Melbourne if you can while the trial’s on. Many of us manage to travel distances for political conferences and protests and it would seem at this time that being in Melbourne for this trial is as important as any of those. In between sitting around court there’s going to be political discussions about how we do support and solidarity in the future.

This is the text of a speech by the G20 Solidarity Collective, Sydney with additions by SourDough.

To donate to the solidarity fund:
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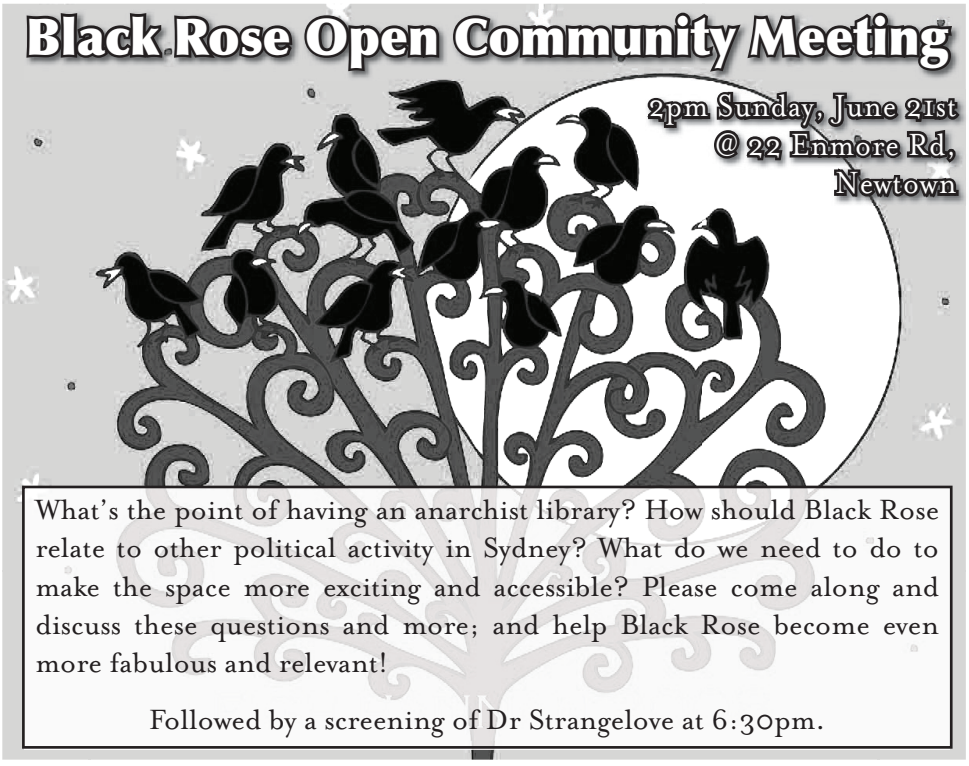
Account name: G20 Arrestee Solidarity Network
cuscau2sxxx (only if transferring from overseas)
BSB 803-143 A/C number: 13291 (all transfers)


Black Rose Open Community Meeting
2pm Sunday, June 21st
@ 22 Enmore Rd,
Newtown
What’s the point of having an anarchist library? How should Black Rose relate to other political activity in Sydney? What do we need to do to make the space more exciting and accessible? Please come along and discuss these questions and more; and help Black Rose become even more fabulous and relevant!
Followed by a screening of Dr Strangelove at 6:30pm.

Support for those who Cross

By Princess mob

Villawood Detention Centre sits bang in the middle of the most unexceptional stretch of suburbia. It is surrounded on all sides by a typical row of suburban houses on quarter acre blocks. Since the final days of the Howard regime – with the rollback of some of the harshest immigration detention policies – and the arrival of the 'saviour', K. Rudd, its place in public consciousness has faded to the level of benign obscurity that its location expects.

But on Tuesday May 12 a man in Villawood detention centre climbed onto a fence between compounds and reminded us who might have forgotten how arbitrary national borders are and how even supposedly less-aggressive border policies continue to destroy people. The fences in Villawood are topped with razor wire and he was bleeding. He had been told that he was going to be deported back to Nigeria. He was due to be married on the weekend. Immigration officials wanted to deport him before his wedding so that he wouldn't be able to use his marriage to help in his application for residency.

Security guards at the centre had given him some bandages. They put a ladder up against the fence and were encouraging him to come down, but he was demanding to speak to someone from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIC). Staff at Villawood were refusing to let his fiancée in to see him unless she promised to ask him to get down.

Another detainee in Villawood called a migration agent in Adelaide to get the news out. They'd called a comrade in Melbourne who called people in Sydney to say that someone was resisting deportation in Villawood. Was there anything we could do?

That evening, about four hours after we first heard the news, two car loads of people drove out. Villawood is big, surrounded by many layers of fences, with the outer layers mostly obscuring the razor-lined fences toward the centre. We could not see our man and all we could do was shout and make noise. While it's hard trying to get a message across in something that can be concisely yelled, we were able to convey that we were there in support. People inside shouted back, waved and flashed lights.

After about half an hour the police came and ordered us to move on. We waved goodbye and headed back home. I've been to lots of detention centre protests and that's what's always hard: at the end, I leave. And the people stuck inside – the people whose protests caused us to come out in solidarity in the first place – have to stay. It's probably really important to show support like this, but it never seems enough.

Some people also did what they could in terms of the legal and political machinations that can help people stay. They tried to get his story into the media. It was budget night however, so there wasn't much chance of getting news attention.

The man protesting the threat of deportation stayed on the fence overnight and the next day. Police were called to Villawood at about midnight the next night to get him down with a cherry picker. According to reports other detainees threw rocks at police and security staff and lit fires. Last I heard he was still in Villawood. Immigration had let him stay long enough to get married. He is still likely to be sent back to Nigeria but might be able to apply for a spousal visa from there.

The white Australian paranoia about invasion by boat – a paranoia that has seen this country become a world leader in innovative ways to deny people entry and shelter – was reawakened recently when people began coming in boats from Indonesia in September.

People who manage to reach Australian waters are taken to Christmas Island to the $400 million Immigration Detention Centre. Other boats are turned back by the Australian military. Howard may be gone but the claim that 'we' (whoever 'we' are) can and should control 'who comes here and the circumstances by which they come' remains a central conceit of the state.

In April this year five people drowned when a small wooden boat carrying 47 Afghan refugees and two Indonesian crew exploded and sank off Australia's north-west coast. Another 37 people were injured in the explosion. The role of the navy in the explosion is unclear. They had been in control of the boat for 20 hours and hadn't given people lifeboats, nor had they moved people onto their own safer boat. An Afghani who had himself survived a boat accident on his way to Australia wanted to visit some of the survivors who were taken to Perth hospital. He was refused entry as the patient was in immigration detention in the hospital.

It is border controls that make these journeys unsafe. Tighter controls force people to make more and more dangerous journeys. People die in the desert of the US/Mexico border region and drown in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe. As the slogan from immigrant rights rallies in the USA says "we didn't cross the border – the border crossed us".

The tightening of border security and focus on the control of people's movements across the globe is a cornerstone of neo-liberal ideology. While we are expected to simply accept the unregulated movement of capital and corporations across borders as a fact of economic life, the same movement of people – especially if it's from the third world to the first – seeking to improve the living conditions is considered a no-no. The Labor party certainly accepts the role of borders in controlling labour power across the globe – let's never forget that they were the party that first introduced mandatory detention.

An anti-border politics should be at the forefront of social struggles and resistance. The issues we struggle against – capitalism in its latest crisis form, the threats to the survival of the planet – are truly global. The struggles against them need to respond with solidarity across borders. The extension of cross-border resistance and solidarity is an actual challenge on borders themselves, and one place this can happen is through support for those who challenge them when they cross.

Reflections on the end of Union Solidarity and the Community Union Weekends

By Tristan Epstein & Liz Turner, with Lulu Garcia

Over the past few months a small group of young activists involved in Union Solidarity organised a series of weekend sessions to reflect on campaigns, educate ourselves about climate change and the economic crisis and experiment with new forms of engagement that would enable us to win industrial and community disputes. The weekends were a deliberate response to the current condition of the left in Melbourne.

Historically informed perspectives on social movements suggest that significant social change can only occur when backed by an effective counterpower. We know that counterpower needs to be based on a group numbering in the thousands with coherent (though not necessarily uniform) ideas, a focused programme, an ability to identify political opportunities, and some degree of autonomy in its social reproduction.

In recent years the kind of social and union activism that we commonly engage with around the left has been characterised by an abandonment of our commitment to counterpower. Instead, in the absence of a large, effective power base, the left has tried to use shortcuts to achieve political results. To give examples:

Education campaigns sometimes targeted at the general population and sometimes aimed at co-opting decision makers. These campaigns pretend that political change is a battle of ideas outside the political economy. The Climate Emergency campaign, using this tactic, has so far only achieved an intensification of a state-centric approach even while the state has explicitly rejected even the minimal demands of the climate movement.

Direct actions such as coal plant occupations had some initial success but have been declining in utility (less stoppage, less media) and increasing in cost (more arrests, stress, repressive legislation, sparking conflict with workers). Organisers claim that media attention will educate the public, who will in turn intervene in the formal political system. We quietly ignore the fact that with proper planning and an effective counterpower, direct action against the coal industry could ultimately resemble popular insurrection.

Sometimes the left has given up the project of social transformation all together and has turned revolutionary politics into self-help. An example is the “community centres” in Melbourne, Loophole and Barricade Books, which have taken to organising board games and punk rock nights that limit the so called participating “community” to those already on the inside, and then impose on this community apolitical diversions. Outside this subcultural bubble, protest has become the ritual repetition of formula entirely without an analysis of effectiveness. In both cases the goal of self-expression is substituted for the goal of achieving social change.

Union Solidarity was a recent and more successful attempt to create real counterpower. From

2004 Union Solidarity operated as a Victorian-based network of activists which provided support for workers in dozens of industrial disputes. Union Solidarity was a vehicle by which unions were able to get around WorkChoices laws which effectively removed the right to strike and imposed huge fines for union organisers and workers who took industrial action without the approval of the Industrial Relations Commission. The basic concept of Union Solidarity included a coordinated but decentralised communications network used to mobilise people for solidarity when needed. This “whole of class” approach meant that people came together with a willingness to put themselves on the line and stand up for workers and community members in need, without necessarily agreeing on a particular ideology.

During the time it was active, Union Solidarity was more likely than any other group or network to facilitate wins for workers and members of the community. Moderate industrial victories were scored against Boeing, Amcor, Toyota, Preston Motors, Coles Distribution Center, VISY, Australia Post and other corporate evildoers. Union Solidarity helped broker successful outcomes for community campaigns such as saving the Sunshine Pool, Camp Sovereignty and the Student Housing Action Cooperative (SHAC).

In March this year Union Solidarity ceased to function. It’s not rocket science to figure out that the existence of a powerful alternative to the ALP-backed unions became a threat to the state (albeit a minor threat). The Union Solidarity website reads, “The decision to fold was prompted by a lack of resources and a need to rethink the group’s core strategy. However Union Solidarity activists believe that given (our) success, the basic concept needs to be spread throughout the whole of the union movement.” With little support from the union hierarchy, this can only happen through the strength and confidence of rank and file workers, shop stewards and organisers. One important function of the Community Union Weekends was reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the Union Solidarity Model. There is an assumption that this model could possibly provide a basis for rebuilding a very powerful left.

The Weekends

We organised three weekends in which participants from diverse backgrounds could come together, identify collectively and begin a process of critical reflection, with a view to working out what we need to do in order to rebuild our social and union movements to something much more powerful than they are today. The best work of the organisers was to create a space in which it was possible for people from different tendencies to offend and confront one another in a constructive and comradely fashion. On the first weekend at Camp Eureka- about 80km from Melbourne- this space was created and there was a profound experience of collective transformation.

Marie Goonan, an elder of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), opened the weekend by explaining that that Camp Eureka has been a site for political education and organising since the 1940s. More than this, the camp was a place not only for planning actions but for a political community that took care of food, education, health, housing and the making of culture. On each day, two hours were devoted to labour for camp maintenance. Car pooling, the formation of

working groups for cooking and cleaning, the distribution of cabins through lucky dip and group exercise sessions in the mornings reinforced the idea of collectivity. Another key dynamic was the presence of elders who were able to critically reflect on past campaigns. Guided by fifty years of activist wisdom, reflecting on the past was not vague or superficial but incredibly powerful. Discussing campaigns like the BLF Green Bans and the MUA dispute set a standard for our own efforts. Intensively structured small group work was emphasised over "talking head" sessions. Talking heads were limited to about ten minutes and were asked to engage in critical reflection. We prepared a reader and DVD with background information and activist texts and encouraged people to read and research as part of their engagement with activism.

The latter weekends at the MUA and Trades Hall did not facilitate the creation of any new, meaningful, collective processes and did not subvert any problematic activist norms. We think this was a consequence of the inner-city locations enabling people to come according to other commitments. New people came. We did not identify collectively, and the entire process was much more about content than it was about experimenting with form.

In the final session on Saturday 2nd May, we invited some independent union activists Liz Thompson, Anthony Main, Diana Beaumont, and Simon Millar to address the question of how we get our unions to consider the concerns of the most exploited workers - international students, young workers and others who often miss out on a piece of the sweet, union-baked pie, by virtue of their casual and precarious employment status, cultural background and/or gender. This session invariably degenerated into the same old debate about whether it's more useful to work inside or outside the mainstream union movement. While the speakers were amazing, we were unable to give the session the same love we had given to earlier ones. We were unable to facilitate collective processes that empowered participants to act. Talking heads and speech-making dominated proceedings and many engaged in combative defence or advocacy of their own positions rather than leaving open the possibility of transformation.

For those of us who have recently emerged from or who still have specific political "homes" (be it Socialist Alternative, Solidarity, the Anarcho Syndicalist Federation, etc), it can be very confronting to admit that we are small, that sectarianism holds us back, and that we don't have the answers. In these times when we need to find new ways of organising and actually become relevant for a change, is it better to be politically homeless ("Free range Anarchist/ Marxist/ Socialist/ Unionist") so we can prepare for what's to come without the baggage of ideologies that were relevant for other times? Rosa Luxemburg would disagree, convinced that if one is not in the process of building the revolutionary party, one is relegated to the role of a leftist "swamp"-dweller. But Rosa, why would we build a party when we don't know how to actually make that party change jack shit right now? Right now, Rosa's party is a spectacle of the past, using language from a previous era.

The project of critical reflection and creating new forms of organising must be ongoing, and to this end, more weekends at Camp Eureka will be organised in the near future. To find out more, email communityunionweekends@gmail.com

Reviews

The Player of Games - Review by Max Solidarity
Novel by Iain M. Banks

The protagonist, Jernau is from The Culture, a kind of socialist utopia, where conscious machines (with human equivalent minds and some with super minds) and biological creatures live egalitarian lives. A section of the Culture called Contact, charged with interfacing with other non-Culture civilisations, is held with some distrust amongst many people within and without the society. There is an excellent critique of power in the novel – and this is mostly explored through the empire of Azad, a relatively small intergalactic empire that is a brutal, violent and exploitative (not entirely unlike our present day earth – and plagued by many of the same problems – eg. massive class divisions). For me the confusion lies within the power that Contact has and how that is different to the power the ruling classes have in Azad. It seems to me that it is an issue of intention. Contact has good intentions whereas the ruling class in Azad wants to maintain and intensify their privilege.

The best and most interesting aspect of the novel was the exploration of gender and sexuality. Being a science fiction novel allows the exploration of these issues in ways that are impossible in other genres. The people in The Culture change their gender at will – from regular human genders to alien ones too – and these changes are chosen to be permanent or sometimes just a phase or for fun or an experience – as a kind of holiday. Their sex lives continue during the process which leaves them in an interim period of androgyny as their physiology changes (however their ability to enjoy their bodies is not affected). Questions of gender are further explored .in the Azad society which has three genders: 'Males', 'Females' and the 'Apex'. The gender roles in their society are highly divided, with the 'Apex' being the most privileged. This exploration of gender hierarchies genuinely gave me insight into the state of our current society – and I think that is one of the most important things that 'art', in the broad sense, can do.

I did often yearn for more details on the technology and the games being played – a lot of the descriptions are apt but overarching and vague – leaving a lot to the reader's imagination. Overall this is a highly readable book with attuned political perception maintained at the forefront.

From Hell - Review by Dumpstered Twin
Graphic Fiction by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell

Set around the Autumn of 1888, London, the graphic novel draws upon over twelve decades of sources that have attempted to solve and interrogate such vicious and incomprehensible events, credited to Jack the Ripper

It's a graphical tome, and it's historical fiction at one of it's best. Within lies horrors of Lovecraftian proportions: bespeaking of cursed obelisks, ghostly apparitions, blood sacrifices, bastard royal children (aren't they all?), hundreds of hoax Ripper letters by everyday people, cults devoted to the Sun God and the magical binding of female power to the will of patriarchy… did I detect a raised eyebrow, dear reader? Yes, it is quite a fantastical Victorian Gothic tale, spurred by Campbell's grim ink sketches, but its well-researched premise and setting allows the reader to experience both the familiarity and unusualness of the streams of thought/knowledge of that period.

Moore's interpretation, and with perhaps a slight hatred for a certain incestuous family, centres around the consequences set in motion when four now-infamous women inadvertently try to blackmail the Crown.

Though the events are written as a hellish story with a psychotic doctor, it's not really about conspiracy and the Free Masons, instead it has much more relevance. The pages takes us through the lives of a specific type of working class women, prostitutes; illustrating their stories of how they got into such predicaments, their daily lives, and the strengths and fears they held whilst working on the dark streets of Whitechapel. The ruling class and their ability to commit crime with impunity is one of the other central themes: using high-ranking police officials to cover-up their transgressions and, in this instance, to divert attention away from Royal involvement – for Queen and Country it seems. A lonely pro-feminist male (an odd idea at the time) who may or may not have been gay was accused posthumously, portrayed as being framed by the police. Social hysteria was also gripped by the events, with Jews being accused of ritual murders; as well as the social and commercial phenomenon with the fascination with murder.

Even after the events of the Whitechapel murders, women in similar precarious situations are still forced to ply their sex for a living in unsafe conditions.

Inside your June *Mutiny:*

- The organisers of the recent Community Union Weekends give us some thoughts and analysis on what went down and why it was important.

- The trial of the remaining three people arrested from the G20 protests in 2006 is finally about to happen. Here's why solidarity is important.

- An argument that creating an effective counter-power will require some serious re-considering of gender roles within the left.

- Fucked border policies still exist under the Labor government as a recent events at Villawood Detention Centre highlights.

- Reviews of *From Hell* and *The Player of Games*.

Upcoming Events

Sunday June 14 - 5pm @ Black Rose Books, 22 Enmore Rd
Who is Bozo Texino. Amazing documentary on the secret history of hobo graffiti. "A hypnotic, rail-rattling tone poem of subversive wayfarer wisdom.' Plus Sydney squatting history show and tell - news pictures & more from the 1940s to the 21st century. Entry by donation. A fundraiser for *Crowbar My Heart: The World's Greatest Squatting Zine*

Sunday June 14 - 6-11pm @ Hermann's Bar, Sydney University, Cnr of City Rd & Butlin Ave
Folk the Police! Fundraiser for G20 arrestees
Bands playing are: Wim :: Winter People :: Emma Davis :: Sui Zhen :: Anarchist Duck :: Pluton Gonsky :: & friends…
Tickets $10 (students/centrelink recipients) - $15 (others) All proceeds from this gig will go to the G20 Defence Fund.

Friday June 19 - 8pm @ Town and Country Hotel, 2 Unwins Bridge Rd, St Peters
Fundraiser gig for Black Rose Anarchist Library Feat. Hee Haw :: Do Not Resuscitate :: Cap a Cappo :: Voting with Bricks. $7

Saturday, June 20
Rally to mark 2 years since the start of the NT intervention. Starts 10:30am @ Belmore Park, near Central. Followed by hip hop @ The Block, Redfern from midday.

Sunday, June 21 - 2pm @ Black Rose.
Black Rose open community meeting: more details inside. Followed by screening of ***Dr Strangelove*** at 6pm.